

November 14, 2011

St. Louis County Executive Charles A. Dooley
41 South Central
Clayton, MO 63105

Dear Mr. Dooley,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of The American Institute of Architects St. Louis Chapter, I am writing to protest the announced closing of twenty three (23) St. Louis County Parks and the possible sale of selected park lands.

AIA St. Louis is the professional organization of over 700 architects and designers in the eastern half of the State of Missouri. Each day, members of AIA St. Louis work to protect the health safety and welfare of the public, our directive from the State of Missouri in our daily practices.

We know that the health safety and welfare components of a community must include opportunities to live, work and recreate. The proposed idea to drastically cut parks and their services diminishes the St. Louis County legacy of being a good place to live, work and raise families.

We are particularly disheartened at the prospect of the sale of park land; recreation forever lost.

St. Louis County is listed as a supporting partner of Great Rivers Greenway District, developed from passage of Proposition C. We read that the significant progress the District made in its first ten years of operation has been to fulfill the promise of creating a legacy for future generations. How tragic that this current announcement belies that legacy and diminishes your administration as a partner with the River Rings concept and mission.

Recently Americans were fascinated by the PBS Series by Ken Burns:
The National Parks: American's Best Idea.

We fear that your administration may be remembered as:
The Closing St. Louis County Parks: St. Louis County's Worst Idea.

We hope that you will reconsider your proposal to close the parks and eliminate valuable employees of the St. Louis County Parks system.

Should our organization be of assistance in shaping the future of St. Louis County, please do not hesitate to call. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle C. Swatek
Executive Director
314-621-3484